

**Statement on Establishing Formal
Diplomatic Relations With the
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**

November 18, 2000

On November 17 the United States joined France, Germany, and the United Kingdom in establishing formal diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

We take this action in response to the remarkable changes in Yugoslavia following the democratic election of President Vojislav Kostunica and the ouster of Slobodan Milosevic. We and our allies are committed to supporting this historic democratic transition. As a first step, the United States will provide about \$45 million in emergency food aid to help the people of Serbia through the winter. We are also consulting with Congress on how to utilize the \$100 million in assistance appropriated for Serbia, as well as \$89 million appropriated for assistance to the people of Montenegro.

President Kostunica and his government have already made dramatic progress in reversing the brutal policies of the old regime. And by taking membership in the United Nations and other international organizations on an equal status with other successor states of the former Yugoslavia, President Kostunica has signaled that his country is ready to play a constructive and stabilizing role in the region.

The democratic transition in the FRY, however, is far from over. The new government is faced with an economy destroyed by years of mismanagement. Members of Milosevic's regime are still in positions of power. Indicted war criminals continue to escape justice for their heinous crimes. But President Kostunica and leaders of the democratic forces have clearly put their country on a new path, one that includes a commitment to the rule of law and peaceful relations with its neighbors. By establishing diplomatic relations and ending the FRY's isolation, the United States and other Western countries are demonstrating our commitment to supporting the new leaders of the FRY on this journey.

**Remarks on Demining
in Hanoi, Vietnam**

November 18, 2000

Ambassador Peterson, Ambassador Le Bang, Mr. Khoan; my good friend Representative Snyder and the other Members of Congress and our American delegation. I want to say most of all how much I appreciate the work that all of you who are engaged in demining are doing.

I thank the Vietnamese people who are doing this, the members of the NGO's. And I'd also like to especially thank the American veterans who have been involved in this endeavor.

The problem of landmines is a global tragedy, and 90 percent of the victims of war are civilians, mostly because of landmines. In all probability, landmines kill more children than soldiers, and they keep killing long after wars are over. This is the tragedy of war for which peace provides no answer.

Vietnam has about 3.5 million mines in its soil and about 300,000 tons of unexploded ordnance. Each year some 2,000 Vietnamese are killed or injured as they go about their daily lives. This year, at Vietnam's request, we began providing assistance to the humanitarian demining efforts. Since June, we provided over \$3 million to purchase equipment and help survey the countryside.

I am happy to announce that we will also be working with Vietnam to develop a computer system and a database to help pinpoint the location of mines and ordnance used here during the war. We have also worked for some years with NGO's such as the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation to fund rehabilitation services for victims of landmines, an effort that owes so much to the leadership of Senator Pat Leahy. Today our Defense Department is donating more than \$700,000 in hospital supplies to Quang Tri Province for the same purpose.

Finally, we support efforts by organizations such as PeaceTrees and Catholic Relief Services to educate local communities on how to avoid landmines. The children's paintings we saw over here are part of that effort, and again I'd like to thank those four beautiful young boys for being here and for